MIDWEST COMPUTER GENEALOGISTS

NEWSLETTER

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RAILROADS IN CASS COUNTY

Midwest computer Genealogists will meet on Saturday, March 16 at 9:30 a.m. in Bromwell Lounge at Brookdale Foxwood Springs in Raymore, Missouri. Our speaker will be Jim Beckner, and his topic will be "Railroads in Cass County" with emphasis on the railroads that passed through Belton and Raymore. Jim has previously spoken at MCG meetings on "Whistler's Mother and the American Civil War", " How Missouri Towns Got their Names" and "The Cole Younger Family", among many other topics. He is a retired history teacher and has been a Civil War Reenactor; he and his horse have also appeared in several movies concerning the Civil War.

Railroads have been a very important part of our history from the time of the Civil War through the first half of the 20th Century. They were an essential part of the expansion of the country to the west coast. Railroads in this area provided more accessible communication and transportation to communities in the region when other means of transportation were not available. Foxwood Springs residents have been surprised to learn in recent years that one of the local branches of the railroad formerly passed through what became the Foxwood community

Put this date on your calendar and join us on March 16 for this excellent historical lesson about the development of this area. Everyone is welcome to attend.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Al Morse

When Dorothy and I were married on August 18, 1963, we lived in Independence, Missouri, where I was a teacher. Many of the weekends, we would go to Rich Hill, Missouri to visit my parents, Albert Frank and Mildred Catherine (Janssens) Morse. We would also travel about 10 miles northwest of Rich Hill to visit Dorothy's parents, Herbert Edgar and Dorothy (McDaniel) Newcomb. They lived on a farm 2 to 3 miles east of Foster, Missouri.

Our son, Brian David, was born on October 4, 1967. In August, 1969, we were visiting at the farm. It was a Sunday afternoon, and Herb was mowing pasture, but came in and asked if I wanted to go fishing. I agreed. He got a small package of steak out of the freezer to use as bait.

We went to the Marais Des Cynges River. And Herb pulled into a field. He took time to cut up the steak, and we walked 100 to 200 feet along the edge of the field and then went down to the river. As we were walking, he kept dropping things and commented that his hands were slick from cutting up the meat. I got my line in the water but he said that he was not feeling too well. I told him we could go back home, but he told me to keep fishing. A little time later, I heard the rustling of a shrub. I looked up, and he was holding on to it, and something was wrong with him. If he had let go, he could have wound up in the river. I ran over to him and pulled his pants up as he had gone to the bathroom. I asked if he was OK and all he could do was grunt. He could not use his left hand, and he was left handed. I got on his left side and held his pants up with my right hand and reached out with my left hand to grab anything that I could to get us up the bank and into the field. He could grab with his right hand.

We got to the field, and I said that I would go and drive the car to him. He shook his head "No". We slowly walked and made it to the car. I put him in the passenger seat. I got in to drive. The keys were in the car, which was also where he kept them at home. It was a stick shift car and I had very little experience driving one. I told him I would drive him to the Butler Hospital, but he shook his head "No". I asked if he wanted to go to the house and he nodded "Yes". I made it to the house and honked the horn as I was coming up the driveway. His wife and my Dorothy came out. His wife knew something was wrong. She got in the car and I drove them to the Butler Hospital, about 13 or 14 miles away. My Dorothy called the hospital and told them we were coming. They met us at the door and got him into the hospital. He had had a stroke. I am so thankful that he did not pass out and was able to help me to get him away from the river.

His wife stayed at the hospital. I drove back to the farm. We loaded our car up, and I drove their car back to Butler, and Dorothy and Brian followed. Dorothy went in to see her mother and father. When she came out, we left their car at the hospital and we travelled to Rich Hill to my folks so we could tell them. We then returned to Independence.

I started a new year of teaching that week. We made weekly trips down to the farm. Herb got to come home on October 4, Brian's second birthday.

Herb never fully recovered from the stroke. He could not drive the car or the tractor. He eventually could drive the riding lawn mower. His wife took over all of the chores. Of course, she had been doing them much of the time as Herb also had worked in Butler at the concrete plant. Naturally, he could no longer work there either. We, of course, kept coming down to the farm and to Rich Hill to visit.

RECOMMENDED READING

THE AMISTAD REBELLION
February 18, 1839
by Jenny Ashcraft, Fold3
https://blog.fold3.com/february-1839-the-amistad-rebellion/

THE YEAR WAS 1941
by Juliana Szucs, *24-7 Family History Circle*
https://blogs.ancestry.com/circle/?p=246

HISTORY OF THE WAC
by Jenny Ashcraft, Fold3
March 1, 2019
https://blog.fold3.com/history-of-the-wac/

WHAT WE REMEMBER

Marjorie Slavens

My high school history teacher had been teaching the same courses for many years when we had an American History course with her during our junior year. She had previously taught the parents of my friends. I doubt the courses had changed much during all of those years. In our World History class the previous year, she only made it to the industrial revolution, and American History did not exist in her classes much beyond the Civil War. Anything beyond 1870 was news to me when I took college history classes.

However, on December 7, she asked us about more contemporary history. She wanted to know what we were doing on December 7, 1
1 when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Several students said they did not remember, and she was very frustrated. She had been asking that question for many years and got better responses. Finally, she asked me because she thought I was her best history student. I told her I was only 5 years old and did not remember it at all. My friends in later years said she no longer asked the Pearl Harbor Day question.

The Second World War, for the most part, was a great mystery for me. The fathers of some of my friends were in military service. My father did not serve because he was classified 4F; he wanted to serve but could not do so. He worked as an electrician in the lead mines in southwest Missouri, a war industry but not exactly how he wanted to serve.

In 1944, about 4 months after my younger sister was born, he got a job in Hanford Washington, where they were building a very secret atomic facility. He did not stay there long; there was no place to bring his family. He then went to Tucson, Arizona and worked for the Southern Pacific Railroad; there was no housing for his family there either, so he arranged to come home and work for the railroad out of Pittsburg, Kansas. Our family separation at the time was very brief, about three months, but my little sister did not know him when he returned.

In the spring of 1945, he was asked by the mining company to return to work for them as a Maintenance supervisor in southeast Missouri. All of his jobs during the war were defense jobs, but he always regretted not having military service.

We learned about the war at school in several ways. My first grade teacher had not taught for years, but her sons were in the army, and there was a need for teachers. Until that time, married women could not continue to teach. During the war, married women replaced the men who were in military service.

At school, we all received our "Weekly Readers". I remember pictures of and articles about Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin; we were all close friends and supported each other. Shortly after the war, the Russians became our worst enemies, and the Germans and Japanese, who were our "Weekly Reader" hated enemies, became our closest friends. Very confusing! It was difficult for me to understand how everything had changed so dramatically. I guess it was like the song from "South Pacific", "You've got to be taught" (to hate).

During the war, my brother made planes from cereal boxes and had some toy soldiers. We listened to radio programs about the war, like Captain Midnight and others, very different from children in recent wars who see the real daily action on television as a part of their daily lives.

At school, we bought red war stamps. My brother, sister and I bought our weekly stamps for a dime,

but the few wealthier families gave their children quarters for the green defense stamps to support the war effort. We occasionally gave rides to soldiers who were stationed at Camp Crowder near Joplin but liked to visit Pittsburg, Kansas, where I guess the major interest was the college girls.

Mother's brother served in the Navy, and her two brothers-in-law were in the Army and the Air Force. We visited our aunts and cousins but did not know our uncles very well until after the war.

These elementary school experiences gave me little background for discussing the Second World War in my high school history course. In college, I planned to major in history but discovered foreign languages. I majored in Spanish, and I taught courses in Spanish language and literature for 36 years. I had minors in history for all three of my degrees. In literature, as well as in genealogy, it is impossible to complete one's research without understanding its historical context.

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REFLECTIONS ON MCG

Marjorie Slavens

When I moved to Foxwood Springs in 1998, I had just taken early retirement. My mother, Mildred Welty Slavens, was our family historian and had already published books on our Welty, Kerr, Eppright, Heape, and Crawford family lines. I previously helped her at times during the summer, but I was too busy from August to June teaching and did not have much time for this activity. I bought her a computer for her 86th birthday two years before we moved here, but she was on her own, for the most part, in the learning process. She learned a great deal in those two years, and when we became involved in the creation of our residents' web site,www.foxwoodsprings.org, in 2000, she

was our best Internet researcher because of her Internet genealogical research. She gathered material for two books on web sites of retirement communities and churches to provide us with some examples of what other related organizations were doing on their sites. Raymore Christian Church borrowed her church web site book when they began planning for their own site.

Some of our new friends at Foxwood learned about her family history activity shortly after we came, and we joined the newly created Genealogy SIG (special Interest Group) that met weekly and was chaired by Jane Dodson, who grew up in Belton and had local history interests, also was an active family history researcher.

Jane could have answered the question about December 7, 1941 that my high school history teacher asked. She went to Hawaii on December 3, 1941 to marry Al Dodson, who had just finished his flight training. They were supposed to be married on December 14, two years after he had begun flight training, but the Japanese arrived on December 7, and Al's commanding officer told him he should not wait to make her a Navy dependent because they might be transferred from Honolulu. Jane and Al were married on December 11, 1941.

Jane, Mother, and several other friends, including Lois Adams, Virginia Wiszneauckas, and Laura Frances Scott, a cousin of MCG President Al Morse, were all DAR members and participated in the chapter that met in Grandview. Mother had been a member of the Blue Springs chapter, and she did not want to change her membership, but she met occasionally with the local group.

Jane and Lois convinced us to attend meetings of the MCG on the third Saturday of the month in the auditorium near Sears in Bannister Mall. We had to go very early because the auditorium held only about 100 people, and everyone wanted to be there for the excellent two hour programs. Our group wanted to be as close as possible so they could see the screen and hear more clearly. As I recall, there were several cars of Foxwood people who attended these meetings.

Dr. Wayne Boydston from Odessa was the President and Jim Stout from Raymore the Vice President when we came. Don Bjuland from Independence was the Newsletter Editor then and later served also as President. We had excellent presentations. There was a break for coffee and cookies between the two hours of the meeting. People had an opportunity to talk to presenters and to share their genealogical research with other participants.

When Bannister was beginning to close, we changed our meeting place to Foxwood Springs in Raymore. As our membership aged and the distance increased somewhat, our participation in meetings began to decrease.

In more recent years, there has been more Internet accessibility available to researchers at home. I have memberships in Ancestry, Archives, Fold 3, and we used to have a Genealogy.com membership. Ancestry had better Census records, but the records were clearer on Genealogy. Mother found her information on Ancesstry and printed it from Genealogy. There are also good resources posted on various library sites, as well as the National Archives site.

We have discussed in recent years whether we should continue to meet, but we have been encouraged to continue by members of other genealogy groups because they have also experienced a decrease in participation but feel the opportunity to meet and have speakers is important to those who want to participate. Some of our members are not able to attend because of distance or health, but they continue to support MCG financially and want to continue to receive the Newsletter. We have been challenged this year by the weather, but we plan to continue to meet, with the exception of April, which would be the day before Easter, and September and December, when we traditionally have not met.

OFFICERS

Al Morse, President
Byron Gilbreath, Treasurer
Marjorie Slavens, Newsletter Editor, Programs